



**State of California – The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

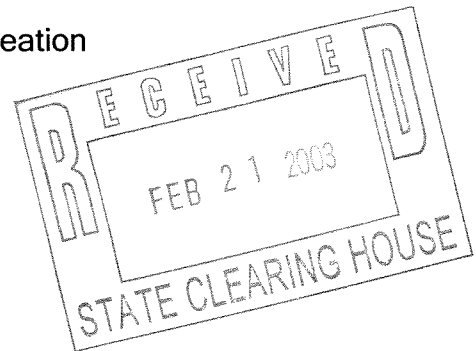
## Notice of Preparation

**To:** State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Interested Individuals

**Subject:** Notice of Preparation of a programmatic Environmental Impact Report for the **Sonoma Coast State Beach General Plan**

**Lead Agency:** California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Northern Service Center  
One Capitol Mall, Suite 500  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Contact: Wayne Woodroof

**Consultant:** EDAW, Inc.  
2022 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Contact: Curtis Alling, Petra Unger



The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), as the Lead Agency, will prepare a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Sonoma Coast State Beach General Plan. We would like to know the views of interested individuals, organizations and agencies as to the scope and content of the information to be included and analyzed in the EIR. Agencies should comment on the elements of the environmental information that are relevant to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

The project description, location, and potential environmental effects of the proposed project (to the extent known) are included in this Notice of Preparation (NOP).

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response should be sent at the earliest possible date, **but not later than 30 days** after issuance of this notice, which establishes the final deadline as **March 24, 2003**.

Please send your written response to Wayne Woodroof, Statewide General Plan Coordinator, California Department of Park and Recreation, at the address shown above. Responses should include the name of a contact person at your agency.

A planning workshop and EIR scoping meeting has been scheduled to give the public an opportunity to comment on the scope, focus, and content of the Sonoma Coast State Beach

General Plan and EIR. The meeting will be held from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm on March 13, 2003 at the Bodega Bay Marine Lab Facility at 2099 Westside Road, Room in Bodega Bay, CA.

## **PROJECT TITLE**

Sonoma Coast State Beach General Plan

## **PROJECT LOCATION**

Sonoma Coast State Beach extends approximately 19 miles from Bodega Head in the vicinity of Bodega Bay to Vista Trail, located 4 miles north of Jenner on the coast in Sonoma County (Exhibit I).

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

DPR's General Plan Unit, in conjunction with its Russian River District office, is in the process of developing a General Plan for Sonoma Coast State Beach ("Park") in accordance with Public Resources Code §5002.2 referencing General Plan guidelines and §21000 et seq. concerning the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The purpose of the General Plan is to guide future development activities and management objectives at the Park. A carrying capacity analysis will be integrated into the general planning process and EIR to evaluate the level of visitor use in relationship to its potential effects on natural, cultural, aesthetic, and recreational resources, overall visitor experience.

The Sonoma Coast State Beach General Plan study area covers approximately 5,333 acres and consists of a series of beaches separated by rocky bluffs and headlands. Beachcombers, fishermen, sunbathers and picnickers can access the beach from more than a dozen points along coast Highway 1. The Willow Creek Unit contains extensive stands of willow riparian scrub, wetlands, and grassland. The upper slopes of the Willow Creek Watershed are heavily wooded. The park provides various recreational opportunity including hiking, horseback riding, surfing, camping, scenic driving, rock climbing, whale watching, wildlife viewing, picnicking, and beachcombing.

Preparation of the General Plan is in its early stages, so ultimate land use and resource management provisions have not yet been determined. DPR is currently in the process of evaluating existing resources and management opportunities and constraints at the Park that will aid in the development of the General Plan, with plan provisions to minimize any potential environmental impact. Known resources within the Park include:

- Coastal environments (underwater areas, intertidal zones, fragile marine terraces with sandy beaches separated by rocky bluffs, coastal bluff wetlands, coastal prairie, sand dunes);
- Marshlands and native riparian habitat;
- Special-status species (e.g., western snowy plover, Tidestrom's lupine, anadromous fish species);
- Russian River and tributaries including Willow Creek;

- Other drainages in the park including Salmon Creek, Jenner Gulch, Furlong Gulch, Scotty Creek, and Marshall Gulch;
- A significant harbour seal haul out at the mouth of the Russian River;
- Culturally significant areas (e.g., Miwok rock shelter at Duncans Landing, Sunshine Rock, Campbell's Cove, Victorian house and historic dairy at Wright's Ranch);
- New and potential property acquisitions.

Issues that will be considered as part of the General Plan process include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Protection and long-term management of sensitive natural, cultural , and aesthetic resources;
- Potential impact to threatened and endangered species and sensitive natural habitats;
- Invasive species management and restoration of natural ecosystems;
- Compatible and incompatible uses of significant cultural resource areas;
- Preservation and restoration recommendations for sensitive cultural resources;
- Expansion of recreational facilities (i.e. campgrounds and trails);
- Erosion control and slope stability issues;
- Water supply and water quality issues (i.e. mechanical opening of the Russian River and available drinking water supply);
- Increased recreational access, including improved water and undeveloped area access and ADA access to the beach,
- Incorporation of new and planned property acquisitions (Redhill and Willow Creek properties);
- Facilities development and siting to avoid flood events (i.e. relocation of Jenner visitor center);
- Development of interpretive facilities at the park;
- Relocation of maintenance facilities at Salmon Creek and historic Willow Creek Ranchhouse;
- Relocation of shooting range at Willow Creek;
- Potential reclassification of inland units as separate park;
- Increased park staffing to ensure public safety;
- Current and future concessions;
- Carrying capacity of the park.

## **POSSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

Although ultimate land use and resources management provisions of the General Plan have not yet been determined, generally expected types of environmental impacts that could occur as a result of the General Plan can be identified. The General Plan will seek to minimize any potential effects through the plan alternative development process. Based on the known resource characteristics of the Park and generally anticipated Park needs and uses, potential environmental effects that will be addressed in the General Plan and EIR, include:

- Potential conflicts between sensitive biological and cultural resources and facility development;
- Protection and long-term research and management of sensitive natural communities;
- Potential impacts to threatened and endangered species or their habitats;
- Potential impacts to sensitive marine resources, including tidepools and underwater reserve;
- Confirmed presence of sudden oak death syndrome in the park;
- Impacts resulting from increased recreational access, including improved water and undeveloped area access and ADA access to the beach;
- Impacts resulting from construction of additional housing sites for permanent and seasonal staff;
- Erosion control issues;
- Mechanical opening of the mouth of the Russian River;
- Shortage of potable water in the park;
- Percolation and other water quality related problems; and
- Traffic safety for along Highway 1.

Because recreational use levels at the Park are not expected to change substantially as a result of the General Plan, no significant transportation improvements and/or impacts are anticipated. If the potential to take threatened and endangered species is identified, the EIR will describe future State and Federal consultation and permit requirements that will be necessary for facility development and the types of typically mitigation expected.

## **INTENDED USES OF THE EIR**

DPR and the Parks and Recreation Commission will use the EIR component of the General Plan to consider the environmental effects, mitigation measures, and alternatives, when reviewing the proposed General Plan for approval. The EIR will serve as the State's CEQA compliance document for adoption of the General Plan. It will also serve as the programmatic environmental document that may be referenced in implementing future actions included in the General Plan. Subsequent project-level activities identified in the General Plan will be examined in light of the program EIR to determine whether and additional environmental document must

be prepared prior to project approval and implementation (State CEQA Guidelines 15168 (c)). Responsible agencies may also use the EIR for subsequent discretionary action as needed.

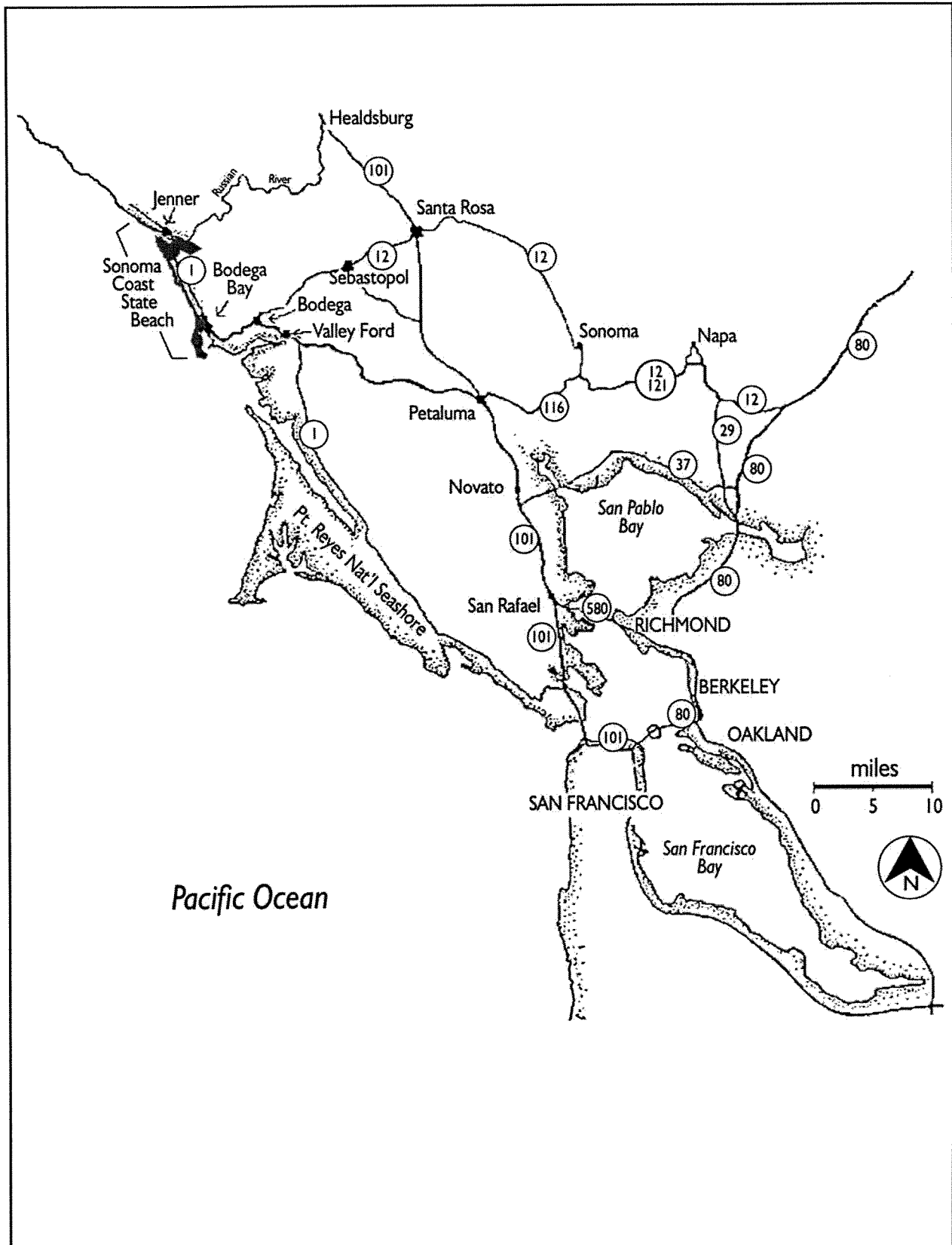
**By:** Wayne O. Woodroof

**Signature:** Wayne O. Woodroof

**Title:** Manager, Statewide General Plan Program

**Date:** February 21, 2003

**Attachment:** Exhibit I: Regional Location of Sonoma Coast State Beach



Source: EDAW, 2003

## Regional Location of Sonoma Coast State Beach

EXHIBIT 1